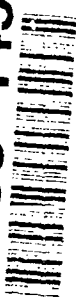


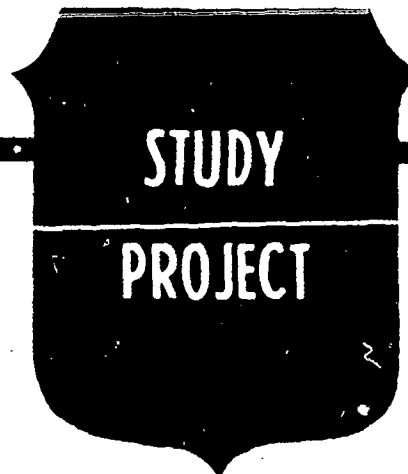
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WILLIAM J. DONOVAN: VISIONARY, STRATEGIC LEADER,  
AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

COLONEL ANTHONY F. CARUANA  
United State Army Reserve

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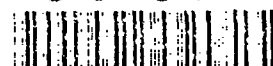
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WILLIAM J. DONOVAN: VISIONARY, STRATEGIC LEADER,  
AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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Project Advisor

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## ABSTRACT

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This paper presents the concepts of vision and strategic leadership at senior levels as enumerated by several respected civilian and military leaders. The major focus of the paper, from an historical perspective, will be an analysis of the life experiences which included family background, education, character and personality, career path, accumulative knowledge, and the network of contacts that lead William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan to become a visionary and strategic leader. It chronicles his life in four stages demonstrating his efforts towards realizing his visions, especially the development of a central intelligence agency for the United States. It attempts to prove that Major General William J. Donovan was a citizen soldier worthy of study by U.S. Army War College students and other senior leaders.

## Introduction

Over the year of study at the United States Army War College, students are exposed to the analysis of leadership at the strategic level. Many case histories of prominent military officers, almost exclusively career officers, are researched, discussed, and analyzed to determine their strengths and weaknesses to serve as models of strategic leaders, visionaries, and military geniuses.

Understanding leadership requires study. Learning from the experiences of past successful leaders through examination of their traits and experiences is a crucial part of this study. FM 22-103 states that one of the duties of a senior leader is to establish and maintain an historical perspective by reading and studying history. It explains that through studying history senior leaders can form a background of knowledge that can provide certainty of purpose, improve moral strength, help in analytical skills, and help form, focus, and refine their visions.<sup>1</sup>

In 1977 Robert K. Greenleaf wrote a book called Servant Leadership. In it he discussed leadership at senior levels. Several men were presented to serve as examples of strategic leaders. These men displayed visions and goals that helped them achieve great results for the common good. Greenleaf suggested that these men should serve as models to be studied, not as models to be copied in detail. They should be studied as models of highly insightful, creative men who

invented roles uniquely appropriate to themselves as servants and leaders. These men, in their time and place in history, drew heavily upon their strengths and used primarily what came naturally to them to achieve their successes.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to present a leader in the same vein as Greenleaf's examples. It will establish that a relatively forgotten citizen soldier is worthwhile for Army War College students and other senior leaders to study as an excellent example of a strategic leader. It will demonstrate that this leader possessed qualities of vision and strategic leadership, and that he had, and continues to have, an impact upon the military and civilian communities of the United States and the world. This will be done through an historical perspective.

This paper will use as a framework materials on strategic leadership from the elements of Carl von Clausewitz's military genius, from FM 22-103's views on vision at strategic levels, and from concepts of strategic leadership espoused by other experts in the field. Through an historical perspective, it will present William J. Donovan as a model of strategic leader and visionary. It will chronicle how Donovan's inquisitive, adventurous, servant-to-the-nation personality led him to have numerous significant growth experiences that developed frames of reference that served him extraordinarily well in almost every endeavor.

I will begin by discussing vision and leadership traits of successful leaders. Next I will delve into the life of William J. Donovan (WJD) to determine from an historical viewpoint those events and experiences that formed his character, personality, visions and dreams. Finally, I will analyze these elements in relation to the end results he achieved so as to highlight lessons learned for senior leaders today.

### Framework

To begin I will use FM 22-103, Carl von Clausewitz, and several experts on leadership to gain an understanding of vision and senior leadership.

There are many views on vision. Let's reflect on some of them. First, Field Manual 22-103 states,

Leadership in peace and war demands senior leaders and commanders who are farsighted, [visionary] flexible, and responsive. They look beyond peace to determine what their organizations need to be able to do for war, set the standards, and then train their units and soldiers accordingly.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, the doctrinal view is that effective strategic leaders must have a vision. It also notes that the key to all that is to be accomplished is a vision.<sup>4</sup> Vision becomes the "hub" from which leadership and command flow. If properly communicated, it establishes a cultural framework for subordinates, and stirs imagination and the will to win.

A second perspective of vision is that of Robert Greenleaf. He contends that the mark of a leader that sets him beyond the others is his ability to point the direction to the goal.<sup>5</sup> "By clearly stating and restating the goal, the leader gives certainty and purpose to others who may have difficulty achieving it for themselves."<sup>6</sup> In his book Greenleaf continues this thought by stating that the word goal is used to mean, in a special way, "the overarching purpose, the big dream, the visionary concept, the ultimate consummation which one approaches, but never really achieves". It is something to strive for, to move toward, or to become, because it is currently out of reach. This vision

...is so stated that it excites the imagination and challenges people to work for something they do not yet know how to do, something they can be proud of as they move toward it.<sup>7</sup>

For Greenleaf, behind each great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams. Additionally, he says that every achievement must start with a goal (a vision), but not just any goal, but one, especially if it is a high risk or visionary goal, that elicits trust. Those who follow are asked to assume risk along with the leaders. He concludes that leaders will not elicit trust for the vision (goal) unless followers have confidence in the leaders' values, competencies, judgment, and perseverance.<sup>8</sup>

A third view of vision is presented by Kouzes and Posner who define it as "an ideal and unique image of the future".<sup>9</sup> They equate personal agenda, legacy, purpose,



dream, or goal with vision, and assert that leaders be forward lookers and display "a clear sense of the direction that they want their organization to take".<sup>10</sup>

There is another position to consider. General Maxwell G. Thurman presented his views on strategic leadership and vision at the Army War College recently. He stated that the strategic leader envisions the future, then designs an institutional strategy for getting there.<sup>11</sup> Next he promulgates the vision of where the organization is going and what it will look like in the future. This vision inculcates a sense of confidence throughout an organization that the leaders are "on top of things and know where they want to take the organization". Furthermore, he stated that this vision allows subordinates to align their own sense of purpose and direction so as to build consensus, loyalty, and commitment. Finally, General Thurman contends that the strategic leader must articulate and institutionalize a set of values that reinforces the vision.<sup>12</sup>

There are many characteristics that the successful senior leader must possess in addition to vision. According to FM 22-103, a senior leader must be first and foremost a teacher and coach. He must be technically and tactically competent. He must instill organizational spirit to achieve and to win. He must care deeply and use his leadership skills to serve his unit and his soldiers. Finally, he must safeguard the traditions of selfless service to the nation.<sup>13</sup> In the execution of his duties his vision must be

communicated so that it is clearly understood and implemented by the organization.

In his book The Charismatic Leader, J. A. Conger states that leadership is a process of influencing others using language as the key means of social influence.<sup>14</sup> In other words, leaders must be skillfull persuaders. They must use a structure of justification in explaining their vision.<sup>15</sup> They do this by providing a "map for action" for framing the vision to "interpret reality" for their followers.<sup>16</sup> For Conger, it is not simply important for the leader to create a vision, but his manner of presentation is critical for generating charismatic appeal.<sup>17</sup>

In John W. Gardner's book On Leadership, he discusses the visionary leader/manager. He lists six ways that the leaders/managers distinguish themselves from the average. First, they possess long-term vision. Second, they can grasp a larger audience external to their own organization, that is, they possess a "world view". Third, they reach beyond their own boundaries to bind people together to solve problems. Fourth, they emphasize the "intangibles of vision, values, and motivation. Fifth, they intuitively understand the nonrational and unconscious elements in leader-constituent interaction". Finally, they are adaptable, that is, they seek a renewal process that looks at the everchanging realities.<sup>18</sup>

Another view that ties together the concepts of strategic leader and vision, in my opinion, is from Carl von Clausewitz's classic work, On War. Clausewitz relates this

Idea in his discussion of the military genius and his attributes.

Any complex activity, if it is to be carried on with any degree of virtuosity, calls for appropriate gifts of intellect and temperament. If they are outstanding and reveal themselves in exceptional achievements, their possessor is called a "genius"...."genius" refers to a very highly developed aptitude for a particular occupation.<sup>19</sup>

Clausewitz continues this discussion and lists the characteristics of the military genius, and, in my view, vision and the senior leader as well. The military genius, he states, possesses the warrior spirit, displays courage, and has powers of the intellect. He relies upon the intellect, the "inner light" (vision) that leads to truth. His courage is of the type that follows the faint light--determination, the "coup d'oeil", the inward eye, or in modern military terminology, the moral courage of his convictions. He has the presence of mind to deal with the unexpected. This genius demonstrates fortitude of mind and character, strength of will, energy, firmness, and staunchness to resist the emotions. He has the ability to keep his head at times of exceptional stress, and violent emotions are kept in check by self-control. The temperament to act rationally at all times is a prime factor. The military genius is also a statesman. He displays a sense of unity and the power of judgment. Finally, Clausewitz concludes that the military genius has an inquiring rather than creative mind, takes a comprehensive rather than a

specialized approach, and has a calm rather than an excitable head.<sup>20</sup>

The final concept on leadership and vision is from Napoleon. It is from his Maxim #115. He states:

The art of war on land is an art of genius, of inspiration....It is by the eyes of the mind, by reasoning over the whole, by species of inspiration that the general sees, knows, and judges...It is finally, a gift, called a coup de oeil militaire, [the ability to vision and take in the military situation at a glance] which great generals have received from nature."<sup>21</sup>

Applying the above concepts to a study of the life experiences of William J. Donovan will demonstrate his uniqueness as a visionary and strategic leader. To do this I will follow the technique McCall et al. used in their book, The Lessons of Experience, which was based upon John Kotter's study of corporate general managers. They analyzed the family background, basic personality, education, career path, and accumulated knowledge and experience of each leader they identified for study.<sup>22</sup>

In developing this historical perspective, four stages of William J. Donovan's life will be chronicled: first, his early life from 1883 to 1919; second, the inter war years from 1919 to 1940; third, the war years 1940 to 1945; and finally, the post World War II years until his death, 1945 through 1959.

### The Vision

Strategy, without information on which it can rely, is helpless. Information is useless unless it is intelligently directed to strategic purpose.<sup>23</sup>

William J. Donovan wrote these words to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on July 23, 1941, to persuade him to establish an agency to gather and analyze information to help prepare for America's involvement in the on-going European war. Years later, on April 4, 1947, Major General William J. Donovan (Retired) read these same words to students in the class at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces to let them know that an agency must also exist after the war to centralize intelligence for strategic use. Would Donovan be successful in the pursuit of his endeavors, his visions? That is what we will discover.

William Donovan was a leader with many visions and dreams. In his earlier years his visions included emulating his childhood hero, Theodore Roosevelt, and leading an Irish unit to victory in battle as he had read in his favorite childhood poem. Another of his visions was to build a centralized intelligence network around the world. Yet another was to achieve unity and lasting peace throughout the European and Asian communities. He also envisioned himself as an untiring servant for the nation as a private citizen, American lawyer, military leader, and political representative.

William Joseph Donovan (WJD), from his earliest days, envisioned his life in dedicated service to his country. From a diligent, enthusiastic boy to college athlete, to successful lawyer and politician, he became one of the most decorated soldiers of World War I. Later he fought prohibition and other crimes as a district attorney. He

then served as acting attorney general of the United States, and personally argued and won important landmark anti-trust decisions at the U.S. Supreme Court. He ran for governor of New York, served on many commissions for his government, and was the "secret legs" for President Franklin D. Roosevelt before being named to create and direct America's first intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II. "The OSS gave birth not only to the CIA but to the Green Berets as well."<sup>24</sup> In his final years, Donovan served on several important government commissions and was the U.S. ambassador to Thailand. Donovan's accomplishments and successes stemmed from his visionary leadership characteristics exhibited and developed from his early childhood and early adult life. He worked his entire life to fulfill these dreams and visions. The remainder of this paper will chronicle from an historical perspective how he did this.

#### Background, History, and Character 1883-1919

Donovan was the son of a very poor Irish American family living on the waterfront of Buffalo, New York. Born in 1883, he grew up watching the exploits of his childhood hero, Theodore Roosevelt, wanting to be the same type of rugged, individualist adventurer and aristocratic gentleman that Roosevelt was.

Another of Donovan's childhood heroes who played a key part in shaping his ideals was Father James Edward Quigley. Father Quigley wanted to attend West Point but decided on the priesthood instead. He was a patriotic, "learned man with an insatiable appetite for knowledge and a brilliant pulpit speaker".<sup>25</sup> These same qualities Father Quigley inculcated in his young protege, Bill Donovan. Father Quigley spent much time with the boy and his family. Additionally, he helped financially in sending Bill Donovan to what were considered some of the best schools in the Buffalo area.

At an early age, Donovan was exposed to concepts of secrecy and deception. Years later these ideas would lead to his ultimate vision, the creation of a super-secret intelligence agency. The agency he envisioned would provide the President of the United States with collected and analyzed intelligence from around the globe upon which to base national security policy and decisions. This vision would lead to the creation of what is today the Central Intelligence Agency. It had been Donovan's dream and life's work to have the finest intelligence system ever devised. It would take him a great amount of traveling and studying and tremendous amounts of personal sacrifice of time and money to achieve this.

It appears that William Donovan's earliest exposure to secret operations was as a child growing up in Buffalo, New York. He witnessed his father and grandfather secretly harboring illegal Irish immigrants from Canada into the

United States.<sup>26</sup> Many of them stayed overnight in the attic or the basement of his home. Additionally, one of the elementary schools he attended, Nardin Academy, was administered by a group of nuns who were of a secretive order established in France in the 1790's when "anti-clerical terror raged"<sup>27</sup>. According to one biographer, Richard Dunlop,

Nardin Academy shaped Will's young mind, and he was always appreciative of this...It is conceivable that an intelligent and perceptive boy whose mind was trained by a sisterhood who does good works in the world while literally living cover lives, might have learned from them some of the attitudes and skills that were to serve well in the world of international intrigue."<sup>28</sup>

Several incidents during his adolescent years demonstrate Donovan's character and accomplishments. They also highlight his desire to be a team player and shun the limelight, which as an intelligence agent years later, were invaluable traits to possess.

One incident occurred at the age of 12. Donovan distinguished himself in an early public speaking encounter in school. He won first prize in an oratory contest by reciting an exciting, inspiring Irish war poem. After winning his first medal, he made a comment at the presentation that remained typical of Donovan for the rest of his life. He stated, "Medals don't mean anything, and things don't mean anything after they're passed; it's doing the thing that matters."<sup>29</sup>

Another incident occurred in high school while he was at St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute. As quarterback of the



school football team and its first captain, he led the team to the championship of Buffalo. Yet whenever complimented for his leadership and awards, he would modestly reply in words to the effect, "Anyone could do it with the other fellows playing such fine football."<sup>30</sup>

The character traits of dedication and hard work filled the years of Donovan's grammar, high school, and college experiences as he perfected his writing, oratory, and acting skills. His work ethic and abilities would lead him to a network of influential contacts who would play important roles in his future. Leaving Niagara University in his senior year, he entered the law program at Columbia University in New York City. There he very much impressed one of his law professors, Harlan F. Stone. Professor Stone later left Columbia to be the U.S. Attorney General under President Coolidge, and then serve as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Stone was responsible for Donovan's appointment to Washington years later. At Columbia he saw, but noted that he had never been associated with, a classmate, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt later in life claimed to have known Donovan at Columbia, but Donovan commented, "I would meet Franklin Roosevelt walking across the campus almost every day, but he never once even noticed. His eyes were always fixed upon some other object."<sup>31</sup> Yet almost thirty-five years later, Roosevelt, as President of the United States, would seek out and rely heavily upon Donovan's expertise in gathering and analyzing intelligence for World War II. Donovan would become

Roosevelt's Coordinator of Information, and later Director of the Office of Strategic Service, which Donovan envisioned as the superspy organization, the Central Intelligence Agency.

After law school, Donovan became a successful corporate lawyer back in Buffalo. As a promising young lawyer, he displayed talents beyond those of his counterparts. His abilities to prepare each case with great care, to discern essential facts quickly, and to read at an extremely fast rate, were traits that would assist him his entire life and amaze his aides in the OSS. Donovan developed friendships with some very wealthy and influential men and women as he displayed his talents. These associations helped him attain jobs with the prestigious law firms. His income helped him and his family rise from the poor conditions in which they had lived in his earlier years. Through a friend he met his future wife, Ruth Rumsey, the well-traveled daughter of Buffalo's wealthiest family. They would marry in 1914. With Donovan's lucrative law practice and his wife's inherited fortune, he was able to live as an "aristocrat" for much of the remainder of his life, as he had hoped he would, as had his hero, Teddy Roosevelt. Like his hero, Donovan had a lust for intrigue and adventure and knowledge of national and world affairs that kept him active in these pursuits his entire life. Having the financial means available made his life's visions reality.

William J. Donovan was not a professional soldier, but he became a member of the Organized Reserve Corps and helped

form the first cavalry troop in his home town. In 1912, Donovan and a group of his "blue-blooded" friends heard the call of the New York National Guard. The state had decided to increase its cavalry units. On May 7, Troop I, First Cavalry was formed from this group of the most socially prominent Buffalolians. Donovan was again emulating his Rough Rider hero, because like him, he was now a cavalryman.<sup>32</sup>

Donovan had never been a horseman or soldier before, but like everything else he ever encountered that presented an obstacle, he surmounted it with study and hard work. He poured his energy into this new endeavor. Over the next few years he collected and scrutinized everything that dealt with military training. The members of the unit bought their own supplies, uniforms, and horses and began to organize and train. Recognized for his natural organizational and leadership abilities and his knack for teamwork, Donovan was soon elected sergeant of the company. Shortly after that, for surpassing each man in his unit, the troops elected him captain, and then commander of the Troop.

Captain Donovan was a firm disciplinarian who ensured all his men were fully trained and physically fit. His Troop I was "complimented highly by cavalry officers of the Regular Army."<sup>33</sup> He was recognized as an outstanding young officer.

During this time from 1912 -1915, Europe was reacting to German stirring, and World War I was beginning. Donovan received an invitation from the Rockefeller Foundation War

Relief Commission director, Warwick Greene, who had heard about the "Buffalo attorney, now 33, who was as personable as he was brilliant."<sup>34</sup> The invitation was for him to join the commission to supervise and carry out relief measures to the war-torn countries. Although required to devote himself exclusively to strict neutrality, it is obvious that with the sinking of unarmed French ships with American citizens aboard and the German government posturing for war expansion, it was hard to remain neutral. Donovan was given access to nearly all of the European countries including those fully engaged in combat. He visited most of these. The information collected and the contacts made would greatly assist later war efforts. It was in London at this time, that WJD met Herbert Hoover, who ran his own Commission for Relief in Belgium. Hoover enlisted the aid of Donovan, sending him into Belgium, Poland, Austria, Albania, Serbia, Sweden, Macedonia, and Germany among other places. According to biographer Richard Dunlop, "Bill Donovan was already gathering information, seemingly just for the excitement of learning, but with an eye for what was significant."<sup>35</sup> He would soon become involved in intelligence work.

While in Europe in 1916, Donovan received word that his National Guard unit had been mobilized and sent to Texas since danger of war with Mexico was imminent. Donovan immediately left Europe and met his troop at the Mexican border where General John Pershing was sent with 4000 Regular Army soldiers and 110,000 National Guardsmen to

fight Poncho Villa. As commander, Donovan pushed his troops hard. For though they saw nearly no action in this area, he envisioned their entry into the Great War in Europe in the not too distant future. He trained and drilled the unit hard for six months as "part of a toughening up process for a war which he knew could not be avoided -- war with Germany."<sup>36</sup>

Donovan and his unit returned to Buffalo upon completion of their duties in Texas. He returned to his wife and young son and his law practice. He continued drilling his unit and began the study of French and German. Because he had so impressed the members of the New York National Guard and the Regular Army with his dedication and hard work in Texas, he was asked to command the 1st Battalion of the 69th "Fighting Irish" Regiment, an historic unit made up of Irish Catholics with eleven battle streamers from the Civil War action at Bull Run, Antietam, Bloody Ford, and Marye's Heights. Additionally, it had participated in over 50 other engagements in the Mexican War, War of 1812, and the American Revolution.<sup>37</sup>

In August, 1917, the 69th was selected from all the National Guard Regiments of New York to represent the state in the newly formed 42nd Rainbow Division, so named by its chief of staff, Colonel Douglas MacArthur.<sup>38</sup> The regiment was redesignated the 165th Infantry in the Regular Army, but it continued to call itself the Old 69th throughout World War I.<sup>39</sup>

Also in August 1917, the newly promoted, Major William Donovan continued to work hard, seriously studying methods of war and driving his men into readiness for combat action on the front lines in Europe. His unit was one of the first American units to see action in the war. During this period before actual combat, the unit trained first in the U.S. and then overseas in France. Donovan studied trench warfare at the Field Officers' School. Additionally, he read many works of military science and was especially pleased on Christmas of 1917 when he received a package of military classic books from his wife back in America. Though not mentioned in any specific reference I could find, I believe that around this time of studying military classics, he read the ancient Chinese masterpiece, The Art of War by Sun Tzu. I believe this for several reasons. First, the book had been translated into English in 1910;<sup>40</sup> therefore, as a collector of military works, Donovan would have been likely to have read it. Secondly, biographer Corey Ford, in the forward to his book, states that in the 1940's when visiting Donovan, he noticed the following:

Shelves lined the walls from floor to ceiling, but there were no signed photographs of the world leaders he had known so intimately, no framed citations or letters, no display of medals won in two wars. All the books in the library, so far as I could see, were on the same subject: the history of intelligence and its early practice in China, in Greek and Persian wars, in Elizabethan times.<sup>41</sup>

Of particular note is Chapter 13 of Sun Tzu's book, regarding spying and the employment of secret agents. I

believe this book, and the others, along with his pre-war studies and his encounter with several Brits in World War I, had a profound influence on Donovan and led him to his vision of the spy agency he would create twenty years later.

In 1918, Sir William Stevenson, who became known as the famous British spy, Intrepid, in World War II, indicated in his own biography A Man Called Intrepid, that he met Donovan in Europe during World War I. No other sources reveal it, but it appears that WJD may have been exposed to the British intelligence operations around this time which may have further piqued his interest in this field thus contributing to his vision. Donovan's hard work and training of himself and his troops would prove invaluable to the Allied cause. He never made his men do what he didn't do. At the age of 35 he was as fit as any man in the unit.

One day Donovan led his men on a wild three-mile run vaulting over walls, plunging down embankments, leaping over ditches, writhing through barbed-wire entanglements. They ended up gasping for breath in a wind swept field. Donovan glared at the men. "What's the matter with you guys?" he demanded. "I've got the same fifty pounds on my back as you men, and I'm ten years older. To which an anonymous reply said: "But we ain't as wild as you, Bill."42

From this episode, "Wild Bill" became his nickname, and he would be called Wild Bill for the rest of his life. All who worked and served with him respected and idolized him even years after they served with him.

Donovan and the 69th accomplished tremendous exploits during the Ourcq Valley, St.-Mihiel, the Argonne Forest, and other campaigns of World War I. (For his bravery and

determination Donovan was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for heroism at Ourcq, and the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism and very serious wounds in the Argonne.) General Pershing awarded Donovan the Distinguished Service Cross on September 7, 1918, on the battlefield, citing him for "...being in advance of the division for four days all the while under shell and machine gunfire from the enemy, who were on three sides of him, and he was repeatedly and persistently counter-attacked, being wounded twice."<sup>43</sup>

Shortly after receiving this award, in a letter to his wife Ruth, he revealed his humble and thoughtful sentiments:

One thing I am glad of, and that is that the system which I used in the training of the men justified itself. Their discipline and above all their spirit held them full of fight in a position which had previously been given up by two other outfits. Physical endurance will give one control of one's nerves long after the breaking point. Courage is the smallest part of it. These men who all along thought me too strict, and felt I had made them work when others did not, are now convinced that I would ask them to do nothing that I myself would not do. This tribute is greater than any honor my superior officers can give me now.<sup>44</sup>

As the war progressed, Donovan was promoted to the rank colonel, and along with General Pershing and Sergeant York, emerged as one of the three greatest American heroes in the war.<sup>45</sup> The medals he earned in World War I while commanding the 69th Regiment of the 42nd Division of the American Expeditionary Force included the Congressional Medal of Honor (See Appendix A); the Distinguished Service Cross, with one oak leaf cluster; the Distinguished Service Medal; two Purple Hearts; the French Croix de Guerre, with palm and



silver star; the French Legion d' Honneur with the rank of commander; the Italian Croce al Merito di Guerra and Order of the Crown; Knight Commander of the order of British Empire; Belgium's highest award, the Order of Leopold with palm denoting heroism in action; the Polish Commander's Cross with Star; Polish order of Polonia Restituta; and Norway's Commander's Order with Star, Order of St. Olav.<sup>46</sup> These awards made him the most decorated American soldier in the war.<sup>47</sup> Yet on October 25, 1918, Donovan received a personal letter from his boyhood idol, former President Theodore Roosevelt, that he prized as much as any award. The letter stated:

Ted [Roosevelt's son also serving in Europe near Donovan] has just written to me saying he would give anything if only he could be made a Lt. Colonel in a regiment under you as Colonel, and Frank McCoy as Brigadier General. My boys regard you as about the finest example of the American fighting gentleman.<sup>48</sup>

Donovan and his unit's heroic exploits were immortalized after the war in a 1939 Hollywood movie, The Fighting 69th, starring actor George Brent as Donovan and Pat O'Brien and James Cagney portraying other men in his unit.

Donovan's network of influential people continued through the war years. Through his exceptional actions and reputation he met many prominent Americans soldiers. They would play key roles in his life and the nation's history. Among these were General John J. Pershing whom Donovan had also greatly impressed in Texas, General George C. Marshall, and Captain Harry S. Truman. Additionally, he worked with

General Douglas MacArthur, the chief of staff of the 42nd Division, who, "never forgave Donovan for winning more combat awards than he did in World War I."<sup>49</sup>

In my opinion, Colonel William Donovan lived up to, and truly embodied the definitions of visionary and leadership. FM 22-100, states, " Military leadership is a process by which a soldier influences others to accomplish the mission. A soldier carries out this process by applying his leadership attributes ( beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills)." <sup>50</sup> Donovan certainly exhibited these attributes. He also displayed "...honorable character and selfless service to your country, your unit and your soldiers."<sup>51</sup> Additionally, he displayed the qualities of Clausewitz's "warrior spirit", fortitude of mind and character, determination, and strength of will.<sup>52</sup>

In concluding this section, it becomes clear that Colonel William J. Donovan at the end of World War I possessed and demonstrated his abilities as a visionary leader at least at the tactical and operational levels. In my opinion, like Winston Churchill, with whom he would work on a close and personal basis in two decades, Donovan's understanding of vision, leadership, and strategy, came about from on-the-job strategic thinking through his traveling, planning, and training during a variety of life-time experiences. These experiences, along with his network of associates, and his outstanding traits of character developed and displayed in his early life and through World War I, would be linked to those from the

between war years, to provide tremendous success for the United States in World War II and beyond.

### Inter War Years: 1919-1940

Thus, what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge...Now this foreknowledge cannot be elicited from spirits, it cannot be obtained from experience, nor by any deductive calculation. Knowledge of the enemy's disposition can only be obtained from other men. Hence the use of spies...<sup>53</sup>

...Sun Tzu

Admiral Louis Mountbatten, a British intelligence officer and Chief of Combined Operations during World War II, said of General William Donovan in 1966, seven years after his death, "This man wasn't just a great American, he was a great international citizen, a man of enormous courage, leadership, vision.....and I doubt whether any one person contributed more to the ultimate victory of the Allies than Bill Donovan."<sup>54</sup>

William Donovan, returning World War I hero, was not content with being just a successful corporate lawyer, although he became one of the best in the country. He was noted as an expert in the area of anti-trust legislation. Between the years 1919 and 1940 he fought and won many court cases and several landmark decisions in the United States Supreme Court. But what made Donovan a strategic leader and visionary was not only these successful endeavors, but also

his constant fascination with European and world affairs and intrigue. He felt that World War I was only a "prelude to more troubles."<sup>55</sup> He read all he could about Europe and the Orient. Through these readings and many personal visits overseas, he became more convinced that there would be a World War II. He was concerned with having a peaceful, unified Europe, but if that was not possible, he wanted to be knowledgeable of events and personalities who might prevent that from occurring.

In June 1919, Donovan with his wife Ruth departed for the Orient for what was to be their long-delayed honeymoon. They traveled leisurely by train across the U.S., then boarded a luxury liner for a trip across the Pacific to Japan. In Tokyo, the U.S. ambassador to Japan, Roland Morris, invited Donovan to assist him on a fact-finding mission into Siberia. Neither Morris, nor the commander of the U.S. forces in Siberia, Major General William S. Graves, were to know that private citizen Donovan was making an independent report for the U. S Government. One of Donovan's law partners, John Lord O'Brian, had been an intelligence aide to President Wilson's Justice Department during the World War. After the war O'Brian had become an intelligence advisor to Wilson. O'Brian was responsible for involving Donovan in gathering secret information for the President Wilson. As a private citizen, Donovan was to provide confidential, objective information on conditions in the Far East especially, in Russia. On his own he would also investigate Japan and China. Donovan accepted

Ambassador Morris's invitation. He reported on the destabilizing White Russian Government in Omsk after the Russian Revolution.<sup>56</sup> This excursion would become Donovan's first important intelligence mission. From this encounter, he would discover interdepartmental rivalries existing between Washington and field representatives in the embassies and missions around the world, especially in the matters of collecting and disseminating information.<sup>57</sup>

On his own initiative, Donovan would also discover German and Japanese influences causing problems in the Far East region. Reading through Donovan's personal journals and diaries reveals his tremendous powers of observation and sense of detail. His writings also reveal his insight about himself. When asked by Ambassador Morris how a lawyer could be such a great soldier, Donovan replied, "I thought trial work was a good preparation for leadership in battle--both required coolness and resourcefulness."<sup>58</sup>

Donovan would learn much about world affairs on this Oriental trip. He noted in his diary on June 19, 1919, in meeting with Japanese officials:

Lieutenant General Sato, representing the military party in Japan, contends that Japan is recognized as a first class power because of her actual and potential naval and military strength. He speaks contemptuously of the money earners...and attacks against Japanese in American Press.<sup>59</sup>

Another entry reveals information he received from Ambassador Morris:

I asked him [Morris] if it were true that Germans had continued to 'be here [Japan] even during the war, and he said, "Yes", that it was true,

because in general the Japanese people had no ill feeling toward the Germans. He believes that much of the antipathy in American (sic) towards the Japanese was due to German propaganda.<sup>60</sup>

These pieces of information and his observation of a Japanese infantry regiment in training showed heavy German influence in Japan that would lead Donovan to foresee possible German-Japanese ties in the next war. He observed Japanese troops in "modified German goose step", wearing "German boots", horses wearing "German saddles". He also found that the Japanese Imperial University followed "German education methods".

His trips through Japan, China, Manchuria, and Russia would provide the future spymaster with valuable geographical data, and other valuable information and contacts in the Orient that he would use for special operations of the OSS in World War II. These trips would also point out the running feud between the War and State Departments over control of information and operations throughout the world, and upon his return, he discovered American politicians' abilities to play partisan politics on foreign and domestic issues. He became distressed at the "timidity and indecision he found in the Wilson administration".<sup>61</sup> However, because he had experienced the Russian Civil War in person, Donovan could speak with authority about it upon his return. Many people sought his opinions on this sensitive issue. His biographer, Richard Dunlap says his manner of speaking as an authority from

personal experience was to be Donovan's hallmark for the rest of his life.

Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, Donovan continued to make many trips overseas and to talk to as many foreign visitors as he could to keep himself abreast of world affairs. "Just as he had once prepared himself for the practice of law and military leadership, he now was preparing for a career in foreign affairs."<sup>62</sup> Dunlap claims that Donovan became part of an informal group of patriotic Americans who kept up on world affairs to supply responsible American government officials with current and accurate information. They knew that America had virtually no intelligence service or manner of gaining accurate information or insight beyond domestic America.

Donovan's return to Buffalo led him to become reinvolved in domestic affairs as well. He took the leadership in establishing the first American Legion post in Buffalo, becoming the first New York State member and delegate to the founding convention in Minnesota. He began to reinvolve himself in local Republican politics. He became a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago trying, though unsuccessfully, to nominate a war friend of his, General Leonard Wood, for the Presidency. . Warren G. Harding, however, received the nomination and also won the election. However, Harlan Stone, Donovan's former law professor, recommended to President Harding to appointed Donovan as U.S. district attorney to Western New York. Donovan received the appointment. Among his duties was to

enforce the recently enacted Prohibition Laws. Although not a drinker himself, Donovan did not believe in prohibition, yet he set himself upon the task with full force and determination to enforce the new laws. He surrounded himself with very capable young lawyers and gathered viewpoints from more senior veteran lawyers in an effort to do the best possible job. His knack of attracting the best talent and providing exceptional leadership was extraordinary; his success was phenomenal in crime enforcement and prosecution. He resorted to the use of spies and undercover agents to provide intelligence to fight crimes in the area. In my view, he learned this technique from his earlier military studies on intelligence, especially the ideas of Sun Tzu:

Hence it is only the enlightened ruler and the wise general who will use the highest intelligence of the army for the purposes of spying, and thereby they achieve great results. Spies are a most important element in war, because on them depends an army's ability to move.<sup>63</sup>

Donovan, like Sun Tzu's wise general, used the highest intelligence of his office in mobilizing his spies in his war against criminals.

As district attorney Donovan's successful arrests and prosecutions of narcotic rings in Western New York brought death threats against him and his family. This did not, however, phase the former war hero. To protect his family, he simply moved them temporarily out of town. To end the threats and stop the crimes he next proceeded to bring in a Chinese undercover narcotic agent. Through intelligence information and deception, he successfully raided a



prearranged narcotic transaction. There he seized the threat makers. This action, along with successful indictments and convictions of the organized crime figures, brought a quick end to the drug racket and in Buffalo and pushed him into the national spotlight.

Donovan continued his gangbusting in Western New York, raiding and busting even his friends who refused to heed his repeated warnings. The actions caused much bitterness between Donovan and his blue-blooded friends. It caused scars that would hurt Donovan's future political aspirations despite his utmost integrity and abilities.

In 1923, the Donovans left Buffalo for a European vacation. Bill Donovan was still interested in world affairs. As a private citizen he would again be a keen observer of European affairs and visit with prominent figures. One of his meetings he would never forget. While in Berchtesgaden, Germany, in a Bavarian Alpine resort he met a young politician, activist, and former member of the German Army. He had been a spy in the German Workers' Party, which had at the present time become the National Socialist German Workers' Party. He was Adolf Hitler! Donovan's biographer Richard Dunlop related this meeting and how Hitler confided in Donovan as other people often did. He learned of Hitler's early family life and his ideas about Germany. Donovan found Hitler had a "curious magnetism", and concluded that Germany was a nation in profound trouble.<sup>64</sup>

Upon returning home, Donovan was rewarded for his tremendous successes in his district attorney role. His former law professor at Columbia, Harlan Stone, now U.S. Attorney General, had followed Donovan's career. With the death of President Harding during the Tea Pot Dome Scandal, President Coolidge needed to bolster the integrity of his office. Stone recommended Donovan for leading the criminal division of the Department of Justice. Donovan was quickly confirmed by the Congress. He then moved to Georgetown and started a brilliant new career as Assistant Attorney General personally arguing and winning many U.S. Supreme Court cases and several landmark decisions which still have an effect on our laws today.

In 1925, Harlan Stone resigned to become a Supreme Court Justice. Bill Donovan was appointed acting attorney general. His courtroom successes continued. By 1929, the year he resigned from this position, Donovan had fought and won more cases before the U. S. Supreme Court than any other person in history.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout these years, Donovan was continually sought after for his opinions and company. The appointment books and diaries of both Bill and Ruth Donovan during the 1920's in Washington and later in the 1930's in New York City reveal the continued personal contacts he established and maintained. These were with former war buddies, law friends, and hundreds of people he met abroad or from all over the United States from heads of state to common

citizens. This continuous network of associates would be extremely useful to him in World War II.

With most of his attention at this time focused upon events in America in the Twenties, Donovan relied upon these friends to keep him current on European and other world affairs. He met and made friends with foreign scholars, businessmen and diplomats who came into his area. He was especially concerned in the 1928 and 1929 with events in Poland. He became convinced that the first European nation to fall in the next war would be Poland. His personal contacts there, in Italy, and throughout the Far East, included many ambassadors who would seek his views, often even before they would confer with the President.<sup>66</sup> Donovan was becoming, in a way, a clearing house of intelligence information from abroad. Donovan knew this was something the U.S. Government desperately needed but did not have or would create for another ten years.

In America, with President Coolidge's announcement not to seek another term in 1929, Herbert Hoover, a close friend of Donovan's since the War Relief days before the war, decided to run. Hoover enlisted Donovan as his chief strategist in his political campaign. Donovan helped draft and prepare Hoover's acceptance speech. He was considered a strong vice-presidential candidate; however, he was not interested in that office. Rather, he would have preferred the position of U.S. Attorney General. Unfortunately, that was not to be. Nevertheless, Donovan's commitment to Hoover was tremendous. His hard work and strategy helped Hoover

win the Republican nomination. Hoover was then elected President, defeating his Catholic opponent, Al Smith.

According to one historian, at Hoover's request, Donovan was asked to provide input on Cabinet appointments. It was widely believed that President Hoover would appoint Bill Donovan as the new attorney general, a position Donovan wanted above all others. However, pressure from Ku Klux Klan, extremist Protestant clergy, and Anti-Saloon League members forced Hoover to select a Protestant and a "dry" for his attorney general rather the Catholic and a "wet". Donovan considered his treatment by Hoover at this time as the greatest disappointment of his life.<sup>67</sup> After this disappointment, he turned down the potential appointments as secretary of war and governor general of the Philippines in the Hoover administration. Donovan had been working for President Coolidge as the U.S. Commissioner to the Colorado River Commission. After the election, he remained as commissioner until completion of the work. Then he resigned. While on the Commission he had been regarded as brilliant for his abilities to conciliate, persuade, and negotiate the vision for construction of what ironically became known as the Hoover Dam.

Donovan left Washington to return to his law practice in Buffalo. Hoover's and the country's problems worsened as the Stock Market crashed and the Great Depression began; however, Donovan's law firm, under his vision and leadership, continued to flourish.

As a world-wide depression also began, Donovan visited Europe and the Far East on a highly secretive trip of which little is recorded. Much of his observation and his earlier predictions of German-Japanese spheres of influence were coming true. He personally watched the Chinese and Japanese armies fight in Manchuria. In Germany he studied the threat of possible Nazi takeover and communist involvement from Moscow.

Upon his return to New York, Donovan was sought after as the gubernatorial candidate for the Republican Party for the 1933 election in New York State. He accepted the nomination, but lost in the election as Franklin D. Roosevelt and his Democratic Party swept the entire nation. Although somewhat depressed at the political defeat, Donovan was even more depressed at what was happening around the world. In March of 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany declaring the Third Reich.

From this point on, Donovan delved into conflicts in Europe, Asia, and Africa. As a private citizen he visited these places to see first-hand what was occurring. He knew from personal experience that the U.S. government had little accurate knowledge of what was happening. To an audience of students at The Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) in Washington on April 4, 1947, Donovan related:

Like every civilian who was a reserve officer, I undertook to get some credit in my service as a reserve officer, recognizing that there were forces at work that might invite war. I had had experience in the Far East and in some of the wars that took place preceding World War II. For

example in late 1935 and early 1936, I had been in a tough lawsuit and I thought a good way to get that out of my head was to go over and see what was happening in Ethiopia. I tried to make clear to Mussolini that we in America didn't think much of the Italian Army and what it could do; that we thought if he wanted to be a new Julius Caesar, he had to show that he could develop a new Tenth Legion. He got indignant and insisted that I go over to Ethiopia and look at the war there.<sup>68</sup>

What Donovan failed to relate here were encounters with General Douglas MacArthur, then the Chief of Staff of the Army. Donovan had approached the military about going abroad to gather information for them, but, "Donovan had scared MacArthur and other military men. They were afraid he might show them up. Let him get started, and he'd soon be running everything."<sup>69</sup> Donovan was denied his request to help gather foreign information until MacArthur had left his post as chief of staff to go to the Philippines. General George S. Simmons, MacArthur's successor as chief of staff, finally agreed to let Donovan assist. Since money was scarce, Donovan was instructed that all funding for the trips was to be at his own expense. This had been his practice all along, and, therefore, was no different from what he had already been doing over the years.

In the incident he had related to the ICAF audience above, Donovan had actually tricked Mussolini into letting him visit the entire Italian Army operations in Africa. Mussolini actually sent Donovan as his personal representative. He was told to return to Mussolini with his findings. Donovan observed Cairo, Sudan, and Ethiopia before he reached the fighting areas. Later, these places

would be of importance to the Allied coalition forces in the invasion of North Africa, in which Donovan was to play a major part. At the Italian front, he observed first-hand the modern warfighting equipment to be used against the Allied powers. Renewing ties with a World War I friend, Marshall Badoglio, the commander of the Italian forces, he lived in the field of battle and formed friendships with leaders at every level of command in the Italian Army. Of particular note, Donovan observed the new S-81 bombers, motorized transports, and military strategy. Donovan was certain Italy would be successful in any invasions. He not only reported back to Mussolini, but also warned the U.S. ambassadors of the United States to Italy and to the League of Nations in Geneva. But his concerns were not well received because a false sense of optimism at the League seemed to contradict his information. It wasn't until several weeks later when Ethiopia fell to the Italians that people took notice.

Donovan next traveled to Spain to observe the Spanish Civil War. He joined Generalissimo Francisco Franco's Fourth Army on the heights of the Ebro River for one of the decisive battles of the war. He would tell the ICAF students about the experience years later:

In 1938, being in Europe on business, I looked at the situation in Spain, because there it was very evident to anyone who could understand that the Civil War was a laboratory for testing out of what was going to be done during the new war. It was important to observe from Franco's side, because, as all you gentlemen who were in the service then will remember, the only representation the Army and Navy had was on the other side:

and yet where the job was being done in developing new methods was on the Franco side.<sup>70</sup>

Donovan's vision and insight here is once again reminiscent of Sun Tzu's comments on the use of intelligence and spying.

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself, but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.<sup>71</sup>

As a private citizen in the late 1930's, Donovan continued to envision the need for a viable central intelligence collection agency. He was concerned for the role of America, its possible neutrality in the uprisings in the rest of the world, and its inadequacy in obtaining accurate and timely intelligence. His comments to the same ICAF students revealed his concern and frustration about the Spanish Civil War incident:

There is one thing that occurs to me as I say this. You will recall that in the history of war in Europe, reference is made to the fact that we had great trouble with the development of our 90-millimeter gun, because we had no knowledge that the 88-millimeter gun had been an all-purpose gun. The only information, according to this report, was during the progress of the war, that the Germans were using it only as an antiaircraft weapon.

As showing the value of getting your intelligence material and having it properly indexed so that those who come afterward will be able to know what is happening, let me tell you my experience in Spain. I remember being in the Battle of Ebro (Ebro). I went down to a German battery and talked to them. I found that they had this 88-millimeter gun and that they were using it there--and I saw it-- not only to cover the advance of the infantry, but they were using it as well as an antiaircraft gun against the Russian



planes. Although I did not see this myself, the Spanish officers told me they had likewise been using it in anti-tank defense.

I thought that was an important item and that I would get some credit for my work as a reserve officer in the Service. I carefully prepared a report after I got back and went to see General Craig, the Chief of Staff, and G-2 and gave them that report. And yet two or three years later it had never reached the Ordnance Department.<sup>72</sup>

This startling revelation was not unique. Army and Navy intelligence rivalry and incompetence would continue. Their biggest disaster occurred on December 7, 1941. Despite Donovan's continual pleadings for the sharing of intelligence through a central agency, valuable intelligence exchange failed to occur. Obvious signs of the imminent attack on Pearl Harbor were ignored or misread even days before the attack.

Several years after the Spanish War incident mentioned above, the same weapons that Donovan had warned about were used to destroy American tanks and American soldiers in North Africa.

In late spring 1939, Donovan wrote in his journal that he feared that "...war was imminent...the Germans would attack through the Low countries".<sup>73</sup> He was correct. World War II started that summer.

In concluding this section, it is evident that Donovan's 1919-1920 predictions, which were based upon his intelligence gathering concerning German and Japanese intentions in the world, had come to fruition. Additionally, his comments about Italy and the Communists in Russia were also accurate. World War II had begun. Through these

between war years Donovan had continued to be a great national leader in law and government service. Despite not receiving the attorney general appointment under President Hoover, and the loss in the race for governor in New York, Donovan's career had been highly successful. Most people would have been satisfied and contented with these achievements, but not Bill Donovan. His appreciation for the importance of collecting and analyzing information provided him with a strategy, as a framework to assist the free world. At the age of 57 in 1939, he continued his quest to fulfill his visions of a centralized intelligence agency for America and for a unified, peaceful Europe. His visions, observations, training, experiences, together with his abilities to organize and lead and use his network of contacts around the world, would prove to be tremendously significant in the U.S. and Allied victory in World War II.

#### 1940- 1945. World War II Years

Leadership and command at the senior level is the art of direct and indirect influence and the skill of creating the conditions for sustained organizational success to achieve the desired results.<sup>74</sup>

This is the definition of strategic leadership. In this next section we will see how William Donovan demonstrated his strategic leadership by developing the means to successfully fulfill his vision. We will see the organization he created and the end results it achieved.

At the end of 1939, the world was in shock over the new war going on in Europe. Donovan worried about developments in Europe and the possible effects on America. He was concerned about America's lack of preparedness in the event it would become involved in this war. In November, 1939, he wrote several newspaper articles about America maintaining its neutrality. In May, 1940, he wrote that "the United States is the only nation on earth which enjoys complete freedom to remain netural with impunity".<sup>75</sup> Additionally, he stated that France and England were "fighting not for democracy, but for survival as great powers".<sup>76</sup> He advocated military preparedness in our hemisphere. He became convinced that the U.S. should build up economically and politically as well. "I know too much about war to glory in it, but wars are made by politicians who neglect to prepare for it."<sup>77</sup> William Donovan was looking out for American. If his government wasn't prepared for the events he knew would come, at least he would be prepared to assist his government if called upon. His visions of a centralized intelligence collection agency became more focused. Shortly, they would become realities.

Donovan continued to follow events in Asia as Japan had invaded China. In Europe, Germany and Russia had attacked Poland. Russia had taken Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, but it was fighting unsuccessfully in Finland. Donovan organized a national campaign to assist Poland and Finland. He became president of the Paderewski Fund to help provide war relief to Polish and Finnish citizens<sup>78</sup>.

Despite the political polarization of Roosevelt and Donovan in matters of domestic policy during the late 1930's and early 1940, the President recognized that Donovan was politically astute and well-connected in foreign affairs. Roosevelt acknowledged that he needed Donovan to serve him and the nation and was preparing to use Bill Donovan in his administration. On June 20, 1940, President Roosevelt appointed two Republicans to his Democratic administration. Frank Knox became Secretary of the Navy, and Henry Stimson became Secretary of War. Knox asked Donovan to be his under-secretary. Donovan declined, for he had a different vision in mind for helping his country. He had been supplying the President with information on world affairs as a private citizen, and he needed to do that a while longer.

On June 21, 1940, the chief of the British secret services in America, William S. Stephenson, came to New York to talk to Donovan. Stephenson, whom Winston Churchill codenamed Intrepid, was given a mission. Churchill needed American help in the war. Stephenson was to bring the U.S. into the war to help Britain. Therefore, Stephenson instinctively turned to Donovan for help in getting American assistance for England in its war with Germany. He had been acquainted with Donovan since World War I. He knew that Donovan had witnessed Russian and German aggression first hand. He also knew Roosevelt and Donovan had a mutual respect and trust for each other. Stephenson was aware that Donovan understood Nazi intentions to influence or control the corporate structure of international businesses through

dummy U.S. subsidiaries.<sup>79</sup> Donovan and Stephenson, shared the same view that the Nazi totalitarian state had to rely on propaganda and terrorism to achieve, and that its weakness was dependency on secrecy. This "laid the foundations of our partnership and put emphasis on the vital area of secret warfare".<sup>80</sup> Stephenson contacted Donovan whom he hoped could convince President Roosevelt that without American aid, Britain would fall, and America could be further isolated and possibly fall to Axis forces.<sup>81</sup>

Stephenson invited Donovan to visit England to study intelligence and war establishments. For Donovan to do this, while America was a neutral nation, required presidential approval. Therefore, Donovan met with Secretaries Knox and Stimson to request permission. President Roosevelt approved the mission telling the Secretaries, "Bill Donovan is... an old friend of mine-- we were in law school together--and frankly, I should like to have him in the Cabinet, not only for his own ability, but also to repair in a sense the very great injustice done him by President Hoover in the Winter of 1929."<sup>82</sup>

For William Donovan, his official entry into the international intelligence community was about to begin. His vision of a intelligence organization for the United States would become a reality, at least for the next five years. The leadership skills, the military knowledge, and the cumulative experiences that William Donovan had acquired would help him make the reality a tremendous success for the United States, the Allied Forces, and the Free World.

Donovan became the "secret legs" for President Roosevelt. He traveled to England. While there, he was also to determine for the President if remarks made by the American Ambassador to England, Joseph Kennedy, on despairing reports of English survivability in the war, were accurate. He was to do this without Kennedy knowing his secret orders.

In Britain, Donovan was taken to see everyone of importance. He visited King George VI, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the Chiefs of Staff, the War Cabinet and important commanders. Additionally, of significant importance, he met "C", code name of Colonel Stewart Menzies, head of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), originally founded by Sir Francis Walsingham during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>83</sup>

"C" would send secret cables to Churchill and to King George VI.

Colonel William Donovan personally representing President left yesterday...United States Embassy not Repeat not being informed...Donovan by virtue of his very independence of thought and action inevitably has his critics but none will deny credit that is due for reaching correct appraisal of international situation. The American government is debating two alternative courses of action. One would keep Britain in the war with supplies now desperately needed. Other is to give Britain up for lost. Donovan is President's most trusted personal advisor despite political differences, and I urge you to bare your breast to him.<sup>84</sup>

Because he was Colonel "Wild Bill" Donovan, he was shown things Americans had never seen before in the field of intelligence collection and espionage. He saw Britain's top secret inventions of radar, intercept planes, coastal

defenses, and British techniques of "unorthodox warfare".<sup>85</sup> Donovan was especially intrigued with the British use of captured German spies as counteragents. Perhaps Sun Tzu's words on use of converted spies (counteragents) came to mind when Donovan saw these activities, for he later used them in the OSS in American special operations.

The end aim of spying in all its fine varieties is knowledge of the enemy; and this knowledge can only be derived, in the first instance, from the converted spy (counterspy). Hence it is essential that the converted spy be treated with utmost liberality.<sup>86</sup>

While witnessing first-hand England's capabilities, Donovan's ideas of American neutrality changed. His ideas began to coincide with those of President Roosevelt's. He believed that Britain had the determination to fight. Additionally, he convinced the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy that contrary to Ambassador Kennedy's alarmist reports, England would hold, it would not surrender its navy, its morale was high, and it was in desperate need of equipment, supplies, aircraft, and especially American destroyers. Donovan recommended to the President the establishment of a "lend lease" program to support Britain. The U.S. would swap destroyers with Britain in exchange for naval bases on British territory. Donovan's law firm had found a precedent in American history to accomplish this sensitive action while maintaining American overt neutrality. The President agreed and approved the recommendation. This action alone became a seminal event in

the resurgence of England as a survivor and eventual victor in the war.

Roosevelt then sent Donovan on a mission through the Balkans and the Middle East to study not only military situations, but also the political, economic, social, and psychological forces that form campaign strategy. By doing this, he became the confidential agent for both Churchill and Roosevelt. Donovan dined with and talked with important men from nearly every capital of Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East from London to Istanbul. Donovan became involved in critical strategic planning and would rely upon the total of his past experiences to assist his President, his country, and the Allied Coalition. He visited with former friends and created new contacts and allies. Churchill was so pleased with Donovan's actions that he cabled Roosevelt with this message.

I must thank you for the magnificent work done by Donovan in his prolonged tour of the Balkans and Middle East. He has carried with him throughout an animating, heart-warming flame.<sup>87</sup>

According to biographer Brown, this journey proved of enduring importance to the war effort. Because of Donovan's words and actions and visits boosting British confidence and his involvement in Yugoslavia, he produced disastrous effects on Hitler's timetable for his Russian campaign. He also provided Roosevelt with a strategy for defeating Germany and Italy with minimal costs.<sup>88</sup> Additionally, because Donovan witnessed first hand the might of the Axis countries as they were rapidly expanding, he reported to Roosevelt, that in order for the U.S. to save



itself it would have to prepare to fight. He suggested the use of unconventional warfare as well as conventional to do this.

Shortly after returning from this trip, Donovan began floating his idea of a centralized intelligence service. He explained his vision to all who would listen, but especially to the President.

Intelligence operations should not be controlled by party exigencies. It is one of the most vital means of national defense. As such it should be headed by one appointed by the President directly responsible to him and to no one else. It should have a fund solely for the purpose of foreign investigation and the expenditures under this fund should be secret and made solely at the discretion of the President.<sup>89</sup>

Many in the military, in the Department of Justice, and especially, in the FBI, where J. Edgar Hoover reigned, were threatened by Donovan's ideas. Many of them would eventually block his attempts to form such an organization after the war, but not before that. Finally, the President asked Donovan to prepare a paper for him about the development of such an organization. Donovan enlisted the assistance of friends in the British Intelligence Service to provide valuable input for his plan. They included, among others, the British spy Intrepid, Sir William Stephenson, and Lieutenant Commander Ian Fleming, the author of the James Bond series of spy novels. Donovan's plan was so convincing that on 11 July 1941, President Roosevelt accepted Donovan's plan. He signed an executive order establishing a new agency. Donovan was appointed as Coordinator of Information (COI), an official title without

precedent in U.S. history. Donovan had been the prime candidate for this job because, according to Stephenson, he was:

..."a natural for the job, for he had the confidence of the President, Hull, Stimson, and Knox; some understanding of the conduct of secret activities; the vision and drive to build an organization; and a demonstrated willingness to cooperate with [the British secret service] in the United States."90

With this appointment, Donovan's vision became actualized. He would now be responsible for establishing his life-long dream of a super intelligence organization. He now had to implement his vision.

The President today, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, appointed William J. Donovan Coordinator of Information.

In his capacity as coordinator Mr. Donovan will collect and assemble information and data bearing on national security from the various departments and agencies of the government and will analyze and collate such material for the use of the President and such other officials as the President may designate.

Mr. Donovan's task will be to coordinate and correlate defense information, but his work is not intended to supersede or to duplicate or to involve any direction of or interference with the activities of the General Staff, the regular intelligence services, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or of other existing departments and agencies.91

Not directly stated in this announcement, was that Donovan could also undertake activities that secured defense information not available through existing departments and agencies. This would mean dangerous operations behind enemy lines. In addition, the President Roosevelt assigned Donovan four requirements: first, plan strategy with the Chief of Staff (General Marshall); second, accept guidance

from the White House on aims; third, discover who was planning post-war policy; fourth, control security for short-wave stations.<sup>92</sup>

These requirements stretched Donovan's abilities. They presented challenges of exceptional significance, not only in establishing the new agency, but also in surmounting the military and civilian obstacles that opposed him. But the major challenge was, as Roosevelt told him, "You will have to begin with nothing. We have no intelligence service."<sup>93</sup>

From July 11, 1941, until the end of the war, Donovan worked no less than eighteen hours a day and received no compensation from the government except for travel and subsistence. Until April, 1942, when he was appointed brigadier general, he drew no pay, yet he immediately set himself to the task of hiring "the most extraordinary assortment of brains ever assembled in a Government agency."<sup>94</sup> He recruited aides and made plans wherever he happened to be. He recruited his law partners, his assistants, his friends. He recruited in offices, at universities, at parties, and at Army bases, or wherever he found talented people. He chose from the cream of academia around the country. Some of them included Harvard professors Edward Mason and William Langer; the president of Williams College, James Baxter; Yale professors, Willmarth Lewis and Sherman Kent; Robert Sherwood, playwright and presidential speechwriter, whom Donovan made head of the radio propaganda department; and other famous American writers, such as Stephen Vincent Benet, Thornton Wilder, and

Archibald MacLeish, who headed the Research and Analysis section for Donovan at the Library of Congress.

Additionally, he hired experts from every field, such as Hollywood producer, John Ford; Thomas G. Early, secretary of the Civil Aeronautics Board; Thomas A. Morgan of Sperry Corporation; James R. Murphy, from the Justice Department, who became chief of Donovan's counterespionage service, X-2; Colonel G. Edward "Ned" Buxton, commander of Sergeant York in World War I, who headed the Oral Intelligence Unit and became Donovan's deputy throughout the war. Other members included two Roosevelts, FDR's son, James, and Teddy Roosevelt's grandson, Kermit, who worked closely with counterpart, Ralph Bunche, in the Research and Analysis Division. Also of significant notation in the agency were David Bruce, who became Chief of the OSS in Europe; McGeorge Bundy, future special advisor to President Kennedy; and Allen W. Dulles, Richard Helms, William E. Colby, and William J. Casey, all future directors of the CIA.

The list of persons recruited by Donovan would be a virtual Who's Who in America. Certainly there are too many to list. Needless to say, one of Donovan's greatest talents was to attract into government service, and retain and "win the complete loyalty and devotion of the most brilliant group of peacocks ever assembled in a Washington agency - a factor that would cause much trouble with the military."<sup>95</sup>

With this illustrious list of recruits in place, Donovan began to organize his agency. He created various functional branches for research, intelligence collection,

and special operations. Of significance, however, is a comment by a former member some thirty years after being out of the agency.

Practically nobody remembers now what a fantastic job Donovan accomplished in creating OSS out of nothing. He gave the United States the first real intelligence service of our history. There was no precedent. There was no time for perfect organization, the job had to be done, and all the individuals doing it, however successful in previous pursuits, were novices in this. It was very challenging.<sup>96</sup>

Despite the challenges, Donovan was very successful. He established the Secret Intelligence (SI) Service when he hired Wallace Banta Phillips, as Director of Special Information Service in November, 1941. Phillips established a tremendous system of agents, many in enemy territory. His early assets included agents in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, in occupied France, in Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Iran, North Africa, and Mexico. Later special operations would include German, Japanese, and Italian occupied territories. The agents in North Africa would prove to be of exceptional value in the invasion of Africa and the assault into Italy.

One of Donovan's greatest challenges came from Washington, especially in hostility from military, naval, FBI, and State Department intelligence services. J. Edgar Hoover, continually jealous of Donovan's undertakings, expressed continual displeasure with the COI. Naval and army personnel were offended that "a mere reserve officer such as Donovan had been put in charge of the fledgling intelligence apparatus".<sup>97</sup>

A major nemesis was the chief of Army Intelligence (G-2), General George V. Strong, a personal appointee of General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff. Strong was Marshall's advisor and hatchet man, and controlled "Magic" and "Ultra", the most vital of cryptoanalysis electronic intelligence sources in World War II.<sup>98</sup> Strong was the most powerful intelligence figure in Washington. He did not like Donovan nor the COI, which caused him great anxiety in dealing with planning and operation in wartime. Strong feared Donovan would become too powerful and tried to limit intelligence accessible to the new COI. Strong perceived, narrow mindedly, that Donovan was his principal rival in the field of intelligence and a candidate for a postwar director of intelligence which most knew would probably develop.<sup>99</sup> Strong refused to even speak directly to Donovan. He did so only through intermediaries.<sup>100</sup>

Air Force General H. H. "Hap" Arnold observed the overall condition in his comments:

The old army and the old navy were not ready insofar as their G-2 sections were concerned for the new kind of war that was being forced upon them. The G-2 men could not see over the hill to the necessity of establishing an agency for securing the new kind of information needed.<sup>101</sup>

Despite these challenges, Donovan persisted in his efforts. His agency rapidly expanded and increased in effectiveness. Eventually some 60,000 personnel would be associated with Donovan's agency from advisors, consultants, to men and women on loan from industry and other services.<sup>102</sup> In the process he established, according to one historian, "a remarkable dynasty -- a dynasty of U.S.

Intelligence masters that would exist forty years later.<sup>103</sup> And from another, "Donovan had created, out of nothing, an organization without equal in the world."<sup>104</sup>

While Donovan was masterminding his organization, resentment and mistrust from other U.S. government and military intelligence organizations, resulted in vital information from the Pacific being kept from him. Also, much of the intelligence received from military and naval attaches ceased in autumn of 1941. Donovan reported later:

"After Europe was overrun by the enemy, our State Department found itself cut off from most sources of information and dependent largely upon what friendly governments chose to provide. We had only the intelligence gathered by other arms. We had no way of telling when information was planted or where rumor originated."<sup>105</sup>

In addition, intelligence from the Chief of Naval Operations missed clear signs of the imminent attack that would occur at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, causing the worst defeat America ever suffered. According to Donovan, after the investigation of Pearl Harbor, he found out that "...we had information, which if properly mobilized and interpreted might well have disclosed to us what Japan intended to do."<sup>106</sup> Statements of investigators also revealed that nobody in either army or naval intelligence staffs studied or was responsible for piecing together valuable "Magic" intercept messages. In effect Donovan's organization had been ignored, "...because it was a civilian service that consequently could not be entrusted with Magic."<sup>107</sup> After Pearl Harbor, the COI would be taken more seriously.

With the entry of the U.S. into World War II, Donovan perceived the necessity of converting what was essentially a civilian intelligence agency into one which would coordinate intelligence for all branches of the military. He recommended this to Roosevelt who issued the military order establishing the Office of Strategic Services on 13 June 1942, with General Donovan named its director. Unlike the COI, its predecessor, he recommended it be placed in wartime under a military agency responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Part of the OSS mission would be providing secret intelligence operations working behind enemy lines. It included unorthodox methods of sabotage, morale subversion, guerrilla organizations, and aid to partisan resistance, actually becoming the forerunner of the Special Forces and Green Berets of later years.<sup>108</sup>

From this point on the feats, failings, and struggles, and ultimate tremendous successes attributed to General Donovan and the OSS would literally fill several volumes. Many of the achievements are still safe-guarded secrets of the U. S. Government and other foreign governments. Many others have recently been declassified by the CIA, FBI, and other governmental agencies. No attempt will be made to expound these events. However, I will briefly summarize a few of them to show their impact upon the successful prosecution of the war in the Pacific and European Theaters of Operation. (See Tab B for structure of OSS.)



Winston Churchill explained his plan to overcome the Germans to Roosevelt, Donovan, and the Chiefs of Staff of Britain and the U.S. It became known as the Arcadia plan. It involved three stages. One involved early defeat of German U-boats in the North Atlantic which would free the allies to reestablish naval superiority in the Atlantic and the Pacific and a good portion of the Mediterranean. The second was to defeat the German armies in Europe, or through internal chaos, to cause unfavorable conditions for them to prosecute the war. Third was the liberation of the captive Western and Southern European countries by landing British and American armies at suitable points, successively, or simultaneously to enable the conquered populations to revolt. Donovan and the OSS would be involved in all aspects of each phase of the plan. They would play an extremely vital role in the successes achieved. Donovan worked with the British in the Combined Chiefs of Staff creation of the plan. He helped plan a series of national uprisings against Germany. Churchill had proposed a combination of orthodox and unorthodox warfare. His only supporter for such strategy in the American military hierarchy, besides Roosevelt, was Donovan.<sup>109</sup> The strategy was to introduce warfare for wearing down and undermining the German resistance. It would involve bombardment, propaganda, subversive activities, and stir revolts and subversive movements in the enemy areas.<sup>110</sup>

Donovan's OSS was able to infiltrate the German Gestapo and the Nazi intelligence service, Sicherheitsdienst, the

elite SS. They established resistance movements throughout North Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and in Far East. The agents helped resistance fighters in Norway sink German troop ships preventing them from participating in the Battle of the Bulge. His spy units behind enemy lines provided Allied air forces with information on troop and ship movements, strategic bombing targets, and other critical data. The OSS had infiltrated Rome, Italy, assisted in subversive and resistance operations causing the fall of Rome and the surrender of the Italians in Northern Italy.<sup>111</sup>

In 1942, the OSS supported guerilla attacks against the Japanese in South East Asia. Donovan would establish Detachment 101 in the Burmese-China area to counter Japanese intentions. The OSS would provide assistance to General Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers and rescue General Jonathan A. Wainwright from Manchuria.<sup>112</sup>

Additionally, OSS agents from North Africa, established radio chains in France and provided arms and ammunition to the resistance movements that eventually helped force the Germans out of France. In September 1943, his members assisted in liberating Sardinia and Corsica. Donovan was involved in the planning and execution of Torch, the plan for the invasion of French North Africa, and Overlord, the Allied invasions of Europe during the war.

In 1944, OSS penetration of German territory, revealed the production of the German "new secret weapon", the V-2 rocket.<sup>113</sup> It managed to intercept German intelligence and diplomatic messages which eventually led to the discovery of

a more advanced rocket bomber, the two-staged A-10, that Hitler designed to cross the Atlantic and reach America.<sup>114</sup>

By the spring of 1945, the newly promoted Major General Donovan had established secret agents and entire units representing the OSS in every important capital in the world.<sup>115</sup>

By the end of the war General Donovan's idea for making unorthodox warfare had been highly successful. His branches performed exceptionally well. Morale Operations units had destroyed the will of many enemy forces to resist; the Secret Intelligence branch kept the President informed of enemy intentions and capabilities; the Special Operations branch had destroyed and disrupted numerous enemy communication lines, before, during, and after attacks; they destroyed bridges, air fields, and transportation networks, greatly impeding enemy advance and progress; the Operations Group prepared the way for main forces.<sup>116</sup> General Donovan's vision of an intelligence organization with clandestine and unorthodox methods had become a reality.

As the war was drawing to an end, General Donovan, now in his sixties, looked to the future as he always did. He saw the continual need for a central intelligence organization to aid in solving the problems of peace after the war was over. He had many critics and adversaries opposing his ideas. However, his strongest supporter was President Roosevelt. Roosevelt asked General Donovan to give consideration for the structure of such an organization. The President didn't have to wait long, for

within two weeks, the memorandum for the plan was on the President's desk. During the period in which FDR was to review Donovan's proposal for a post-war agency, Roosevelt died. This was not only a blow to the nation, and the free world, but also to General Donovan. He had lost his "principal source of his power" at the worst time.<sup>117</sup>

President Harry S. Truman was a man who was not involved in Roosevelt's dealings with Donovan and the OSS, nor with war planning in general. Additionally, Truman did not like Donovan. The new president, however, through the House Appropriations Committee asked key members of the Joint Chiefs their recommendation of the OSS's continued use.

MacArthur and Nimitz confirmed they did not want Donovan's organization. The India-Burma theater (where the fighting was now at an end) found no use for it "under current directives." On the other hand, China headquarters announced that its value was likely to be "extremely high." Carlo and Caserta reported that the OSS had made a "great contribution" to the Italian campaign, and its presence would remain essential as long as the situation in Italy, Austria, and the Balkans remained unstable. As for the European theater, Eisenhower thought the future value of the OSS to be high and believed that its withdrawal from that theater should not be considered "under any circumstances."<sup>118</sup>

In May of 1945, Associate Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, the chief prosecutor for the Nuremberg war crimes trials, asked General Donovan to serve as an assistant prosecutor with him. Donovan accepted, and at the same time tried to keep the OSS together.<sup>119</sup>

Although the Joint Chiefs advised the Appropriation Committee that the OSS would continue to be useful, those who opposed Donovan continued to influence the new

President. Effective 1 October 1945, the OSS, as developed by Donovan, was abolished by Presidential executive order.<sup>120</sup> However, Truman directed that several of its subordinate branches and activities be transferred to other government organizations for continued peacetime usage. This fragmented, decentralized concept was contrary to Donovan's vision of a centralized, independent, civilian controlled intelligence organization. Donovan had witnessed the successful realization of his vision during wartime, with the hope of its continued existence during time of peace. However, this hope for the continuation of a peacetime central intelligence agency as he had envisioned, was once again thwarted. Believing that personal resentment towards him was one of the major factors contributing to the demise of the OSS, Major General William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan was discharged and became a private citizen once again on 12 January 1946. But his fight for a peacetime intelligence network did not end, nor did his service to his country.

In concluding this section, it becomes perfectly clear that Major General Donovan became a strategic leader in every sense of the terms presented earlier in this paper. Additionally, as a visionary we see his vision clearly stated, enthusiastically enacted, and partially institutionalized during the war. His strategic vision also included a view well into the future, and one he would continue to pursue until the end of his life.

### 1946-1959 His Last Years

In 1941 and 1942, Colonel William Donovan had successfully articulated the concept of his vision of a centralized intelligence organization to President Roosevelt. The President readily saw the need that Donovan related and formed the organization Donovan had envisioned. The successful operations, reports, and comments of Donovan's subordinates in the OSS during and after World War II certainly attest to Donovan's ability to articulate his vision, or in Conger's words, his "map for action". His strategy for global use during World War II was highly successful. What Gardner said about the visionary leader, certainly applies to Donovan as well, that he possessed the "long-term vision" that provided a "world view" that reached beyond his own boundaries to "bind people together to solve problems."<sup>121</sup>

In the fall of 1945, the successful war organization, the OSS, was disbanded by the new president, Harry S. Truman. As a result, Donovan was presented a new challenge, to persuade President Truman and the American people that the intelligence agency he had started was as necessary now that the war was over as it had been during the war. As a citizen practicing law back in New York, General Donovan continued to warn America that this intelligence system was a vital necessity.

In a note to Donovan, dated 20 September 1945, Truman thanked him for liquidating the wartime activities of the

OSS which the President felt would not be needed in peacetime. He attempted to assure Donovan that a peacetime service would be constructed and explained how the remaining assets of the OSS would be divided and distributed to various agencies in the government.<sup>122</sup> In so doing, he had dispersed much of the capable leadership Donovan had groomed to serve the nation. All of this was contrary to Donovan's intended vision. It caused him much concern.

By early 1946, Truman realized that he was not receiving vital information from overseas that he had been receiving before he disbanded the OSS. Additionally, he came to realize, as General Donovan had speculated, that the U.S. had developed a critical intelligence gap pushing it back into the darker periods that existed prior to Pearl Harbor.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, on 22 January 1946, Truman signed a Presidential Directive establishing a Central Intelligence Group (CIG) to function under a National Intelligence Authority (NIA).<sup>124</sup> He tried to use those fragmented assets from old intelligence networks, but by this time they were too weakened to function effectively.

Donovan went on offensive to try to rectify the problem. In speeches, newspapers, and magazines he espoused the dangers in the new CIG service which lacked civilian control, independence, and leadership. He would point out "...that faulty intelligence had seriously injured the nation in the past, and .... the CIG would fail."<sup>125</sup> He delineated his vision that the U.S. must have a coordinated, centralized, and civilian-directed intelligence agency

Independent of all other departments and responsible directly to the President; all ideas he had previously conveyed to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman.

Although no longer associated with the CIG or OSS, Donovan continued his pursuit of intelligence operation which included his fight against growing Russian Communist expansionism. In July, 1946, he visited the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College attempting to establish a chair for irregular/unorthodox warfare.<sup>126</sup> As previously noted, in April, 1947, he spoke to the students at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces on "Economic Intelligence", a topic of increasing concern even today. This report is the most revealing of the determination and articulation of William Donovan's strategic vision that I can find anywhere. In it he eloquently states his goal, his vision, his strategy. In my opinion, this important work should be read in its entirety by all War College students, not only for its discussion of economic intelligence strategy, but also for the outstanding articulation of strategic vision by this historic strategic leader.

So it is not the function of intelligence to determine policy or to enforce it. It is the function of intelligence simply to appraise and interpret and sum up what it finds, and to do that same thing time and time again. Indeed, there is nothing mysterious or sinister in it. It is simply a gathering together of many items that constitute a mosaic of knowledge upon a given situation and then the interpretation of that information....[In gathering it] there is a part that is fulfilled by the unorthodox and irregular. Intelligence can be obtained not merely by propaganda against the enemy, but as well by operation with resistance groups behind the enemy



lines, because out of that comes a huge element of intelligence that can be of great value.

I think we are apt to miss this: that intelligence has its strategic as well as its tactical use. What weight shall be given to one or the other and how intelligence shall be geared into a given situation depends largely upon whether you are at peace or whether you are in imminent danger of war.

But that belongs to the Dark Ages of our thinking. Today there is a growing concept that strategy consists of integration of all those resources of a nation; and it includes, as total war must be interpreted, the commitment of all the people of a nation to the cause. In addition to that, jet propulsion, bacteriological warfare, atomic energy, and all of those necessarily place the intelligence as your first line of defense, because with the annihilation of space, the only defense in depth you have, is defense in depth in time, and that can be availed only by superior intelligence. 127

General Donovan then went on to explain in this formerly classified "Restricted" presentation, to eloquently articulate his strategic vision for the central intelligence agency.

Now, all of this, gentlemen, when we speak of economic intelligence in the strategic sense, emphasizes the immediate use that must be made of the information. You may speak of it as something that is distinct, but in a larger strategic sense it is just like discussing one limb on the whole body of intelligence, because, changing the metaphor, all of these, whether military or economic or technological or whatever they are, are simply channels entering into one reservoir of intelligence. Unless we get that into our heads, it is going to be pretty difficult for us to make the approach to the kind of intelligence that we must have in the modern world.

That brings me to this consideration: It has always seemed to me that intelligence has always been an Orphan Annie in the Services. There has been no recognition of the fact that in and of itself it is a profession, that is, it has its body of doctrine, that is, it has its particular phases that must be understood and its methods must be developed, and that it has its techniques without which there cannot be a proper

analysis and evaluation of the material that is gathered. We have always ignored that, so we had gone for over a hundred years without a real system.

When the time came that I felt the throat of OSS ought to be cut and we ought to get out, I recommended that there had to be developed certain assets as bearing upon the intelligence that ought to be conserved; and that ought to be put into an organization of peacetime in order to preserve the peace, because it is a whole lot harder to prevent war than it is to wage it. We see that every day. In order to do that, there should be set up a central intelligence agency with a civilian head. It should report to the same official whether it be the President or the Secretary of National Defense or Assistant President, that the Services, the Army and the Navy, report to. That ought to be done, because, unless you have intelligence independent instead of being a hand-maiden, you cannot get that freedom of action or of thinking that is needed in order to have it of value....So any intelligence unit, in order to be effective must be free....you must have it central...[it] has to have an independent budget....

My own recommendation, gentlemen, is that what ought to be done is to leave undisturbed the intelligence functions of G-2, ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence), and of the State Department and all other departments of the government, because they need to develop their own intelligence for the settlement of their daily operating problems. But on the strategic level, on the long-range material, there needs to be set up an organization that can gather together all of this material and supplement it where it is found necessary, and in there should be buried your secret intelligence.

Now, there is an awful lot of bunk about the necessity for covering up your intelligence service. The only people that you fool are not the intelligence services of other nations, because every intelligence service that is worth its salt knows about the weaknesses of our system. The only people that are fooled are ourselves and our people.

In addition to that what is essential to do is to keep in mind that today the question that you have to answer in time of war is no longer where or why, but when. The only way you can answer that question "When?" is by superior knowledge. We want to be sure that in addition

to being our first line of defense, intelligence is not our last line of defense.<sup>128</sup>

In addition to Donovan's personal crusade to get the attention of the population, many magazines and newspapers also spread his message in an unclassified fashion. One article that attracted much attention appeared in the October, 1947, edition of Reader's Digest. The article "Our Wartime Spymaster Carries On" by Frederic Sonder, Jr. extolled the exploits of General Donovan and expounded upon his post-war intelligence ideas.

So "Wild Bill" is fighting again. He wants an independent intelligence agency, with a civilian at its head, which can coordinate the information of all other Government agencies, supplement that with its own findings, and present the complete picture to the President and the Cabinet for speedy attention. Whether we like it or not, we have many enemies in the world today, says Donovan. We must know exactly what they are doing. That makes as much sense now as it did in 1940. "Wild Bill" has recently returned from one of his "investigative trips" to Europe. It behooves us to heed what he has to say.<sup>129</sup>

President Truman was eventually forced to accept the concept of a central intelligence agency since he realized fear of Soviet power was increasing even though the war had ended.<sup>130</sup> On 18 September 1947, William J. Donovan finally realized his life-long goal. President Harry S. Truman signed The National Security Act of 1947 replacing the ineffective CIG and NIA with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).<sup>131</sup> Donovan was delighted since this agency followed the course he had charted for President Roosevelt over three years earlier. The major vision of his life was now and for the remainder of the Twentieth Century a complete reality.

Donovan's life and ambition, however, did not end with the creation of the CIA. He envisioned new concepts, those of a free United Europe, an end to Communist expansion, and a brighter economic picture for the world. In 1947, he became the director of the World Commerce Corporation. He later became chairman of the American Committee for a United Europe, and at the same time became a stronger opponent of Soviet Communism.

Donovan continued his law practice, and his intelligence work. The new CIA established a liaison officer to maintain contact with Donovan "...who continued to be America's master spy".<sup>132</sup> He also continued his efforts to bring about a European union.

His final contribution to U.S. public service came through his fight against communism. He warned against Soviet subversive war. He saw this as a cancer spreading into Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, Albania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia. It also invaded the Far East and Southeast Asia. He saw the makings of a World War III, but not necessarily as a shooting war, "...because the Reds are winning without shooting..."<sup>133</sup>

On July 29, 1953, General Donovan returned to government office for the last time. At the age of seventy-one he served for President Dwight D. Eisenhower as the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, a critical country surrounded by communists. Although he served there only one year, his achievements were significant. Biographer Richard Dunlop quotes a Newsweek magazine article.

...Donovan stopped Communist infiltration in Thailand. He created an atmosphere of trust toward the U.S. and began operations to help bolster Laos and Cambodia. Donovan's energy and drive captivated the Thai. Despite his 70 years, he moved about the country constantly, getting to know people. He hustled back and forth between Washington and Bangkok, cutting through red tape to get things done.

Last week, his quiet work paid off. As the Indochinese war limped toward its tragic conclusion, Thai announced that they would double the size of their training forces and welcome a large American mission.<sup>134</sup>

Unfortunately, due to health and difficult financial circumstances, Ambassador Donovan left Southeast Asia. Perhaps if he had stayed he could have convinced former OSS agent, Ho Chi Minh, to stay loyal to the West instead of turning to the Soviet Union.

General William Donovan's health deteriorated in the late 1950's. He died at Walter Reed Hospital on 8 February 1959, at the age of 76. Before his death, however, he was awarded our nation's highest civilian award, the National Security Medal by President Eisenhower. Donovan became the first person in American history to hold the top four American awards, the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, with oakleaf cluster, and the National Security Medal.

## Conclusions

This paper presented the life experiences of Major General William J. Donovan in an attempt to prove that he is a worthwhile example of a visionary and strategic leader for Army War College students and other senior leaders to study. It analyzed from an historical perspective Donovan's long-term visions and accomplishments. It analyzed his early life and family background, his personality and character, and his education. Additionally, it discussed his accumulation of information, his network of contacts, and some of the experiences that contributed to his ability to achieve great results for the common good.

After presenting several views on vision and the strategic leader, this paper presented William Donovan in four stages to demonstrate how he exemplified these concepts. First, it reviewed his early years from birth in 1883 until his return as a hero from World War I in 1919. Next, it reviewed the inter war years from 1919 through 1940 when he worked as private lawyer, district attorney, assistant attorney general, and information gatherer. It then reviewed from 1940-1945 some of General Donovan's spy master and special operations efforts and those of his OSS organization in World War II. Finally, it reviewed the later years of Donovan's life and career from 1946 until his death in 1959. He was revealed as a great American statesman and as a strong campaigner for a peacetime central

intelligence agency, for the economic development and unification of Europe, and for the fight against spreading communism around the globe.

At the beginning of this paper, several views of vision and strategic leadership were presented. How they relate to William Donovan is easily concluded. Robert Greenleaf suggested potential senior leaders should study men who displayed visions and goals that helped them achieve great results for the common good. He submitted that these should be men who are highly insightful and creative, and who invent roles uniquely appropriate to themselves as servants and leaders; such men draw heavily upon their strengths and use their natural abilities to achieve. Bill Donovan was not in Greenleaf's book, but he certainly fits his criteria. Donovan does deserve further study as a visionary and strategic leader. Donovan's visions and accomplishments have left a tremendous legacy for the citizens of the United States and the Free World. His accomplishments in his public career as soldier, lawyer, humanitarian, and statesman, and his clandestine exploits as an intelligence master attest to this.

Greenleaf, FM 22-103, Kouzes and Posner, and General Maxwell Thurman all pointed out, as was explained very early in this paper, that the key to successful senior leadership is vision. This group, along with Conger and Gardner, also noted that the leader's vision must be articulated to instill confidence and loyalty, and to provide a map for action for his subordinates to follow.

Clausewitz and Napoleon, also quoted earlier in this paper, discussed vision and leadership. They described the successful senior leader as one who possesses the warrior spirit, the courage, the inspiration, the coolness, the self-control, and the temperament to act rationally at all times. As depicted in this paper, William Donovan exhibited all of these qualities. Additionally, he was able to stir imagination and the will to win, and, as Conger suggested, he generated charismatic appeal.

Several quotes will serve to summarize the events presented in this paper and to provide references to the above concepts and provide first-hand support for the conclusion that Donovan is a unique visionary and strategic leader and one worthy of study.

Biographer Richard Dunlop, former OSS subordinate of Donovan, said:

Donovan had all the requisite vision and drive to build swiftly an organization of sufficient size and confidence to play an effective part in the war.<sup>135</sup>

Biographer Corey Ford, another OSS subordinate of Donovan, wrote:

Today the revisionist public is tired of heroes, the military heroes who win wars or the political heroes who lose them. Donovan was another kind of hero. His courage in combat during the First World War was legend, but he had no love of battle. He participated in most of the landings during the Second World War, he exposed himself heedlessly, because he felt a recurrent need to take risks in order to justify asking others to do the same. "It isn't how brave you were yesterday," he told me once in a moment of revealing frankness, "it's how brave you are today." His coolness under fire - not only in war but in government service - was the result of stern self-discipline. Caught between the



attacks of the extreme right and left, he forced himself to remain objective and calm.136

Hollywood filmmaker, producer, and Academy Award winner, John Ford would say of his OSS boss in World War II:

Bill Donovan is the sort of guy who thought nothing of parachuting into France, blowing up a bridge, passing in Luftwaffe gas tanks, then dancing on the roof of the St. Regis Hotel with a German spy.137

Another comment by Corey Ford reveals Donovan's determination, coolness, and sense of purpose.

Donovan was the calm eye of the storm. Instead of resorting to recrimination, he remained positive and forward-looking. Utilizing the legal skill acquired both as public prosecutor and head of his own law firm, he and his staff drafted and painstakingly redrafted a proposed OSS directive, which he submitted to the JCS with a memo explaining simply but forcefully all the reasons why such a directive was necessary to enable the agency to carry out its assigned function with sufficient authority to give it at least a fighting chance for success. On one point he was adamant: OSS should never become a part of any other government agency or of the Armed Forces. To be effective, he agreed, it had to supply informed and reliable information both to Army and Navy Intelligence and to the State Department and other federal branches. His insistence on this principle of independence, to the possible jeopardy of his own future as well as that of OSS, was the main reason that the agency emerged in time as an integrated unit, serving all departments of the government but subservient to none.

Despite its uncertain future in 1942, OSS continued to attract topflight men to the still obscure agency. Donovan's own personality and reputation enabled him to lure professional leaders of the highest character and ability, who were then or later would become nationally famous in academic, diplomatic, banking, business, and other fields. It is a striking fact that, from among these recruits to OSS, any President could have selected an outstanding cabinet.138

In researching the material for this paper, I have found many tributes to William Donovan. Every one of these, coming from a subordinate or peer, reflected a sincere admiration for the magnanimity of this great American leader. These comments signify General Donovan's value as a strategic leader. I will close this paper with a few of these quotes as a final summary attesting to the contributions of this visionary and strategic leader.

Admiral Louis Mountbatten the Chief of Combined Operations of the British said of Donovan in 1966:

"This man wasn't just a great American, he was a great international citizen, a man of enormous courage, leadership, vision.... and I doubt whether any one person contributed more to the ultimate victory of the Allies than Bill Donovan.<sup>139</sup>

President Dwight Eisenhower, another admirer of General Donovan, said of him in the citation for the National Security Medal:

Through his foresight, wisdom, and experience, he foresaw during the course of World War II, the problems which would face the postwar world and the urgent need for a permanent, centralized intelligence function. Thus his wartime work contributed to the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency and a coordinated national intelligence structure. Since the creation of the Agency, he has given to it generously of his experience, making through the postwar years a valuable contribution to the field of intelligence relating to the national security. In 1953 and 1954, as Ambassador of the United States to Thailand, he served in this important diplomatic post with the same tireless energy and skill he had shown in his wartime service. Both in public and private life he has made outstanding contributions to the security of his country.<sup>140</sup>

Ned Buxton, the Deputy Director of OSS, gave an especially stirring tribute to General Donovan at the final gathering of OSS employees in 1945 and reaffirms the thesis of this paper. That is, the characteristics of vision and strategic leadership were exhibited by William Donovan. His numerous contributions are still coming to light as this paper is being written. Many of Donovan's papers and those of his organization are gradually being declassified and made public.

History will know and record only in part the value of [Donovan's] service.

As the perilous years passed, he extemporized; he devised; he asked for the improbable and confidently achieved it. He capitalized on his weaknesses and attacked. Inspired by his personality and his vision, thousands of devoted people took the uneven odds. People of all ages lived or died as duty demanded or circumstances permitted. They killed and were killed alone or in groups, in jungles, in cities, by sea or air. They organized resistance where there was no resistance. They helped it to grow where it was weak. They assaulted the enemy's mind as well as his body; they helped confuse his will and disrupt his plans.

And with it all, the General assembled the brains to evaluate and the competence to estimate the material that flowed back from a thousand vital sources, dealing with the enemy's capabilities and intentions and morale, military and civilian, the bottleneck targets, and the web of diplomatic intrigue. General Donovan, all of us, whatever our role, whatever our individual spot in the pattern of your unprecedented task - we esteem it a very great privilege to have served our country under your banner.<sup>141</sup>

A final example of William Donovan's vision and contribution as a strategic leader and thinker is contained in comments he made on 3 October 1952. It appears that in his vision and efforts for a free and unified Europe he

foresaw, as early as 1952, events unfolding and materializing today.

They call me the father of central intelligence, but I would rather be remembered because of my contribution to the unification of Europe. Until the great heartland continent of the West is truly unified there can be no assured future for all mankind. Today unification is critical because it contributes to the defense of the West, but tomorrow it will be a great source of strength through peace. One day the Iron Curtain will lift and the captive nations of the East will become part of a United Europe. Even Russia, purged by future events of its desire to bully and subdue its neighbors, will be a member, and given the innate genius of the Russian people, a respected and valued member. When Europe is truly unified, it will flourish, and Communism will be shown for what it is, not the wave of the future at all, but a dead ideology out of a cruel past which has been employed by cynical masters to control common mankind.<sup>141</sup>

This paper has established through an historical perspective that General William J. Donovan was a visionary and strategic leader. He is an excellent model for U.S. Army War College students and other senior leaders to study. In conclusion, the most recent tribute to General Donovan serves as a final testimony to this great hero and his impact upon the world today. It was delivered by Judge William H. Webster, the current Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, on 28 October 1988, at a dedication ceremony. The dedication was for a life-size statue of the Director of the Office of Strategic Services, Major General William J. Donovan, at the CIA Headquarters, Virginia.

To those of us here today, this is General Donovan's greatest legacy. He realized that a modern intelligence organization must not only provide today's tactical intelligence, it must

provide tomorrow's long-term assessments. He recognized that an effective intelligence organization must not allow political pressures to influence its counsel. And, finally, he knew that no intelligence organization can succeed without recognizing the importance of people - people with discretion, ingenuity, loyalty, and a deep sense of responsibility to protect and promote American values.143

### Recommendations

William J. Donovan is a fascinating historical character and an excellent example of a visionary and a strategic leader. The following are recommendations about him and his life work.

1. Recommend that Major General William J. Donovan, USAR, be listed in course materials for U.S. Army War College students to study as a strategic leader or as a great captain.
2. Recommend that General William J. Donovan be studied as an example of a visionary and as a strategic leader.
3. Use William J. Donovan as a case study on senior leadership.
4. Have Army War College students read General Donovan's "Economic Intelligence" presentation of 4 April 1947 to ICAF students and his memorandum on establishment of the OSS to President Roosevelt (TAB C) as excellent examples of articulation of strategic vision.

5. Encourage War College students to continue the research started here on William Donovan to discover and delineate additional strategic operations recently declassified and housed at the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks.
6. Recommend more time be made available for Military Studies Program (MSP) research that does not conflict with other course work during the academic year.
7. Recommend the modification of the hours of operation of the U.S. Army Military History Institute to facilitate serious research in the evenings and on the weekends.
8. Recommend the reading of biographies of William J. Donovan.
9. Recommend as a research project or MSP Donovan's influence and impact on the development of the U.S. Special Forces.
10. Recommend the study of William Donovan by civilian students as a civilian leader.
11. Recommend the study of William Donovan by Reserve and National Guard officers to determine the citizen soldier impact in strategic leadership.

## APPENDIX A

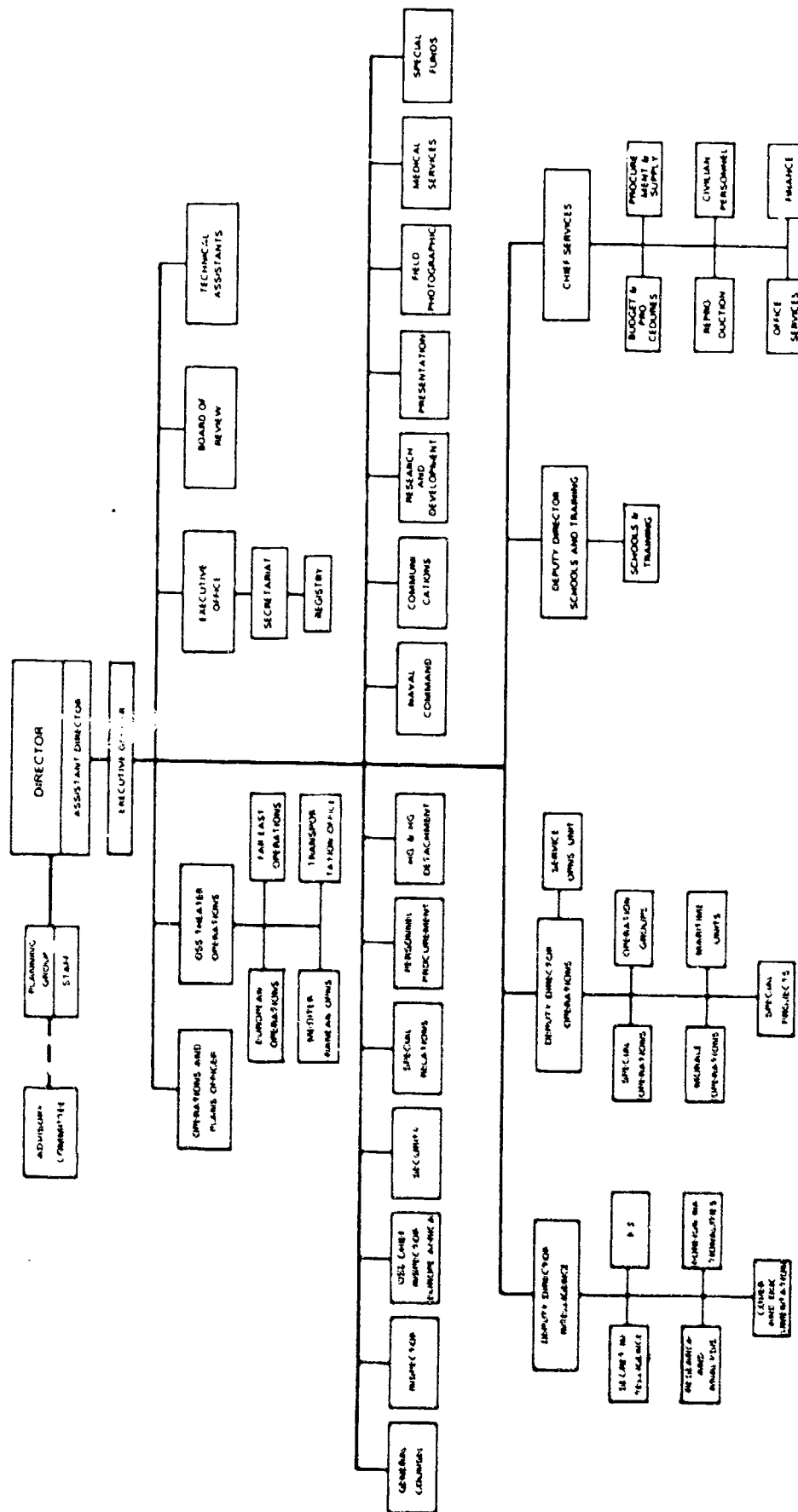
The citation in the Congressional Record reads:

Before Landres and St. Georges in the Argonne on October 14 and 15 the positions were known to be strong. The artillery preparation was brief. It was evident that the attack could be carried through only by desperate resolution. This resolution Lt. Colonel Donovan determined to reinforce by his own example. When the Third Battalion moved out to the assault, he went forward in the rear of the first wave, deliberately wearing the marks of his rank so as to be easily recognized by his men though it also rendered him conspicuous to the enemy.

The assaulting battalion met with a terrible reception as it crossed the open ground and moved up the slopes toward the trenches. Machine guns and artillery ravaged it from the front and flanks.

Officers and many of the best non-commissioned officers were hit and some platoons began to be disorganized. Then Colonel Donovan, moving erect from place to place in full view of the enemy, reorganized and heartened his men. As spurts of dust went up around him and shells broke in the vicinity, "See," he said, "they can't hit me and they won't hit you."

Officers and men of this battalion say that it would have been impossible for them to have made the advance they did had it not been for the cool resolution, indifference to danger, and personal leadership of Colonel Donovan. It is the general opinion that his conduct on this occasion was of the highest type of courage witnessed by anybody in this regiment during the four major actions in which it has been engaged. 144





## APPENDIX C

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*Donovan's Memorandum for the President, November 18, 1944.*

Pursuant to your note of 31 October 1944 I have given consideration to the organization of an intelligence service for the post-war period.

In the early days of the war, when the demands upon intelligence services were mainly in and for military operations, the OSS was placed under the direction of the JCS.

Once our enemies are defeated the demand will be equally pressing for information that will aid us in solving the problems of peace.

This will require two things:

1. That intelligence control be returned to the supervision of the President.
2. The establishment of a central authority reporting directly to you, with responsibility to frame intelligence objectives and to collect and coordinate the intelligence material required by the Executive Branch in planning and carrying out national policy and strategy.

I attach in the form of a draft directive (Tab A) the means by which I think this could be realized without difficulty or loss of time. You will note that coordination and centralization are placed at the policy level but operational intelligence (that pertaining primarily to Department action) remains within the existing agencies concerned. The creation of a central authority thus would not conflict with or limit necessary intelligence functions within the Army, Navy, Department of State and other agencies.

In accordance with your wish, this is set up as a permanent long-range plan. But you may want to consider whether this (or part of it) should be done now, by executive or legislative action. There are common-sense reasons why you may desire to lay the keel of the ship at once.

The immediate revision and coordination of our present intelligence system would effect substantial economies and aid in the more efficient and speedy termination of the war.

Information important to the national defense, being gathered now by certain Departments and agencies, is not being used to full advantage in the war. Coordination at the strategy level would prevent waste, and avoid the present confusion that leads to waste and unnecessary duplication.

Though in the midst of war, we are also in a period of transition which, before we are aware, will take us into the tumult of rehabilitation. An adequate and orderly intelligence system will contribute to informed decisions.

We have now in the Government the trained and specialized personnel needed for the task. This talent should not be dispersed.

*William J. Donovan*

DIRECTOR

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#### TAB A

#### Substantive Authority Necessary in Establishment of a Central Intelligence Service

In order to coordinate and centralize the policies and actions of the Government relating to intelligence:

1. There is established in the Executive Office of the President a central intelligence service, to be known as the \_\_\_\_\_, at the head of which shall be a Director appointed by the President. The Director shall discharge and perform his functions and duties under the direction and supervision of the President. Subject to the approval of the President, the Director may exercise his powers, authorities and duties through such officials or agencies and in such manner as he may determine.

2. There is established in the \_\_\_\_\_ an Advisory Board consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, and such other members as the President may subsequently appoint. The Board shall advise and assist the Director with respect to the formulation of basic policies and plans of the \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Subject to the direction and control of the President, and with any necessary advice and assistance from the other Departments and agencies of the Government, the \_\_\_\_\_ shall perform the following functions and duties:

(a) Coordination of the functions of all intelligence agencies of the Government, and the establishment of such policies and objectives as will assure the integration of national intelligence efforts;

(b) Collection either directly or through existing Government Departments and agencies, of pertinent information, including military, economic, political and scientific, concerning the capabilities, intentions and activities of foreign nations, with particular reference to the effect such matters may have upon the national security, policies and interests of the United States;

(c) Final evaluation, synthesis and dissemination within the Government of the intelligence required to enable the Government to determine policies with respect to national planning and security in peace and war, and the advancement of broad national policy;

(d) Procurement, training and supervision of its intelligence personnel;

(e) Subversive operations abroad;

(f) Determination of policies for and coordination of facilities essential to the collection of information under subparagraph "(b)" hereof; and

(g) Such other functions and duties relating to intelligence as the President from time to time may direct.

4. The \_\_\_\_\_ shall have no police or law-enforcement functions, either at home or abroad.

5. Subject to Paragraph 3 hereof, existing intelligence agencies within the Government shall collect, evaluate, synthesize and disseminate departmental operating intelligence, herein defined as intelligence required by such agencies in the actual performance of their functions and duties.

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6. The Director shall be authorized to call upon Departments and agencies of the Government to furnish appropriate specialists for such supervisory and functional positions within the \_\_\_\_\_ as may be required.

7. All Government Departments and agencies shall make available to the Director such intelligence material as the Director, with the approval of the President, from time to time may request.

8. The \_\_\_\_\_ shall operate under an independent budget.

9. In time of war or unlimited national emergency, all programs of the \_\_\_\_\_ in areas of actual or projected military operations shall be coordinated with military plans and shall be subject to the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Parts of such programs which are to be executed in a theater of military operations shall be subject to the control of the Theater Commander.

10. Within the limits of such funds as may be made available to the \_\_\_\_\_, the Director may employ necessary personnel and make provision for necessary supplies, facilities and services. The Director shall be assigned, upon the approval of the President, such military and naval personnel as may be required in the performance of the functions and duties of the \_\_\_\_\_. The Director may provide for the internal organization and management of the \_\_\_\_\_ in such manner as he may determine. 146

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